



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Our Mission

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's (CMA) mission is to protect and safely store aging chemical weapons while working toward the effective assessment, treatment and ultimate elimination of the nation's recovered chemical warfare materiel.

The CMA headquarters management team, as well as scientific, communications and support staff, is based at the Edgewood Area of the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, while other dedicated managers and staff fulfill the agency's mission from weapons storage and recovered chemical agent materiel sites at locations across the country.

In January 2012, CMA completed one of its two destruction missions—the chemical stockpile elimination at seven stockpile sites, using incineration and neutralization.

Destruction

The agency was responsible originally for two distinct chemical weapons destruction projects.

The Chemical Stockpile Elimination Project managed the safe treatment and destruction of chemical weapons using incineration and neutralization technologies.

The Army selected incineration, also referred to as "baseline incineration," as their preferred chemical weapons disposal technology in 1985, based on rigorous tests and comparisons of various technologies. The first incineration facility, a pilot facility built on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, successfully completed disposal operations in November 2000. Operators dismantled the facility, and the atoll was returned to its natural state and serves as a wildlife refuge. Incineration was also used at Pine Bluff, Ark., Anniston, Ala. and Umatilla, Ore. Pine Bluff completed operations in November 2010, Anniston's operations finished in September 2011, and Umatilla finished destruction of their stockpile shortly thereafter in October 2011.

The final site, in Tooele, Utah, completed destruction operations in January 2012.

Neutralization was first selected as an alternative to incineration for bulk agent storage sites only. Depending on the type of agent requiring destruction, neutralization involves mixing the chemical agent with either hot water or hot water and sodium hydroxide in order to eliminate the harmful characteristics of the agent. This process proved successful in Edgewood, Md., eliminating its entire stockpile of mustard, or blister agent, in February 2005, and in Newport, Ind., eliminating its entire stockpile of nerve agent VX in August 2008. Neutralization is the selected method for the Department of Defense's U.S. Army Element Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program facilities near Richmond, Ky., and Pueblo, Colo.

The Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project (NSCMP), another major component of CMA's destruction mission, will continue to assess and destroy recovered chemical warfare materiel. NSCMP's commitment to excellence was evidenced with the demolition of the nation's former chemical warfare production facilities, completed in December 2006, the destruction of the binary chemical weapon inventory, completed in November 2007 and the destruction of the last non-stockpile treaty-declared items in April 2010. NSCMP uses a variety of mobile assessment and treatment technologies to treat recovered chemical warfare materiel across the country, in U.S. territories and around the world.

Storage

CMA is also responsible for safe storage of the Nation's chemical weapons stockpile before its ultimate destruction. CMA manages a National Inventory Control Point and National Maintenance Point to ensure the stockpile is maintained safely during its remaining storage life.

Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA), a separate Department of Defense program, is responsible for the safe destruction of the Army's chemical weapons stored in Colorado and Kentucky. The program oversees the design, construction, systemization, testing, operation and closing of the pilot plants that will destroy the chemical weapons at both locations.

For more information, contact the CMA Public Affairs Office at (410) 436-3629 (800) 488-0648

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Our Mission (continued)

CMA also partners with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) to ensure effective emergency preparedness of the communities surrounding the stockpile storage sites. CSEPP provides funding for chemical accident response equipment and warning systems. CSEPP also oversees yearly community-wide emergency preparedness exercises at all of the stockpile sites and works with communities to conduct public education activities to enable residents to respond appropriately to a chemical stockpile incident.

International cooperation

In addition, CMA met its commitment to its destruction mission as outlined in the 1997 Chemical Weapons

Convention, which more than 180 nations signed as their pledge to rid the world of this class of weapons.

Technical expertise, training and financial support for the safe and environmentally-sound destruction of chemical weapons located at seven sites within independent states of the former Soviet Union were provided through the Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

Summary

From dedicated workers ensuring safe, secure storage and destruction of recovered chemical agent materiel, to technical experts collaborating with international colleagues, CMA strives to accomplish its remaining missions and to create a safer tomorrow.